

A
SERMON

Preach'd at the

Cathedral-Church

Of *WORCESTER*, at the
ASSIZES held there *August*
the 21st, 1720.

By *WALTER JONES*, A. M. Rector
of *Upton upon Severn*, and Chaplain to
the Right Honourable *WILLIAM* Earl
of *Coventry*.

*Publish'd at the Desire of several Gentlemen
then present.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for *SAMUEL MOUNTFORT*, Book-
seller in *Worcester*, and Sold by *JAMES*
KNAPTON, at the *Crown* in *St. Paul's*
Church-Yard. 1720.

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SERMON

Cathedral-Church

OF WORSHIP

ASSIZES held there August

the 21st 1720

BY WALTER JONES, A. M. Rector

of West upon Street, and Chaplain to
the Right Honourable William Earl
of Cambridge.

Printed at the Office of General Censor
1720

LONDON

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1. JOH. iv. former part of Verse 7.

Beloved, let us love one another.



HERE is nothing more agreeable to our Nature, or more suitable to that Station in which it has pleased the Divine Providence to place us, than that we should love one another. To communicate and correspond with each other in reciprocal Acts of Friendship and Kindness, to wish well, to do all the good Offices

we can to our Neighbour, to have a tender compassionate Resentment of the Miseries of others, *to rejoice with them that rejoice, and to mourn with them that mourn*, are Principles originally impressed upon our Souls, and interwoven with our very Composition. We are all so nearly allied, and by so strict a Bond engaged to each other, that if we have any Love for our selves, we must love others, and not to do so, is, according to the elegant Expression of the Prophet, *Is. 58. 7. to hide our selves from our own Flesh.*

Nor is the Love of each other only the primitive Dictate of natural, but it is also the plain Injunction of instituted Religion. By this we are commanded to *love our Neighbour as our selves*, Lev. 19. 18. *And as we would that Men should do to us, to do to them likewise*, Mat. 7. 12. Our blessed Saviour has enforced this Duty with higher Sanctions, and upon stronger Terms; for which reason he styles it a new Commandment. *A new Commandment*, says he, *give I unto you, that ye love one another*, Joh. 13. 34. And he has made it the Badge and Characteristick whereby sincere Christians should be known and distinguished from Men of all other Professions and Religions. *By this shall all Men know that ye are my Disciples if ye have love one to another*, 35. And indeed there is not one Duty within the compass of the whole Christian Law more frequently inculcated, more powerfully urged, or more affectionately recommended
by

by the Apostles in their Writings, than this. *If there be any Consolation in Christ, says St. Paul to the Philippians, 2. 1, 2. If any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fulfil ye my Joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same Love, being of one Accord, of one Mind. And again, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, 4. 31, 32. Let all Bitterness, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-speaking, be put away from you with all Malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

But no one of the inspired Writers has so copiously handled the Subject, and so frequently recommended the Practice of Christian Love, as St. John the eminently beloved Disciple; as if our Lord's singular Endearments to him had dilated his Breast with larger Notions of brotherly Love, and he had fetcht those persuasive Strains wherewith he describes it, and which occur every where throughout this Epistle, from his Master's Bosome.

In discoursing upon the Words before us, I shall

1st, Offer some Motives to the Practice of this Duty of Christian Love.

2dly, I shall take notice of some Instances of the Breach of it, and then conclude all with a suitable Application.

The

The 1st Motive to this Duty of loving one another, that I offer, is the Example of God himself.

God is loving to every Man; it was the result of his free and unconstrained Love that he created us out of nothing, and breathed into us the Breath of Life; that he impressed upon us his own Image; that he has given us the free use of Reason and Understanding, whereby we are enabled to come to the knowledge of, and to chuse Good, and to refuse Evil; that he is still our merciful Preserver watching over us for our good, protecting us from Dangers, and carrying us thro' all Temptations. He displays the Wonders of his Love, when he makes *his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust*, Mat. 5. 45. When he gives us from Heaven fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness, Acts 14. 17. He gives not, as Men often do, *hoping to receive again*; He is secured from that by the Perfection of his infinite Being, by the Fulness of his Power, and the Extent of his Dominion. *All the Beasts of the Field are his, and so are the Cattle upon a thousand Hills; the World is his, and all Things that are therein. He gives to all Men liberally and upbraideth not*, James 1. 5. Not like the Men of the World, whose Liberality is too often confined to some special Objects, and who are apt to reproach those who have partaken of it. So far is our obliging

liging Benefactor from doing *that*, that he is pleased and delighted with our acceptance of his Favours ; He encourages us to make our selves capable of them ; *He stretches out his Hands all the Day long to a gain-saying People*, professing in the most affectionate manner, that he *would not the Death of him that dyes*, and asking with Astonishment, *Why will ye dye in spight of Life ? Why will ye perish in the Arms of Mercy ?*

Such then being the Love of God to Man, we have hereby a strong and engaging Motive to copy after that amiable Pattern, to endeavour as much as in us lies, to be merciful, as he is merciful, and to *be perfect as our Father also which is in Heaven is perfect.*

A Second Motive to our loving one another is the Love of Christ. When we and all Mankind were dead in Trespases and Sins, and Rebels against the Divine Majesty, it pleased the Almighty Father to give his only begotten Son in the likeness of sinful Flesh, to relieve our Misery, to atone for our Sins, to reconcile us to himself, and to be the Way to everlasting Life. It was *through the tender Mercy of our God, whereby the Day-spring from on high visited us, to give Light to them that sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, and to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace*, Luke 1. 78, 79. The Divine Purpose and Grace, as St. Paul speaks, 2 Tim. 1. 9. *which was given us*

us in Christ Jesus before the World began, was in the fulness of Time made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolisht Death, and brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel. That Word, which first gave Being to the World, comes down into it, and do's not only command that there be Light, but is Light it self; for our Saviour has told us of himself; I am the Light of the World; he that follows me shall not walk in Darkness, but have the Light of Life. The Law indeed was, as the Psalmist speaks, 119. 105. a Lamp to the Feet, and a Light to the Paths; it was as a weak glimmering Taper on the Hill of Sion, to guide to the Temple at Jerusalem; it gave to the Jews less perfect Rules of Life. But the diviner Law our Saviour promulged, is a Meridian Sun; has Heat and Influence as well as Splendor; descending from above, it directs us thither, even to the New Jerusalem, which is above, and the Mother of us all. Hence we receive a full and perfect System of the Will of God, Rules so agreeable to our Nature, so full of Evidence to recommend them to the Understanding, so full of Goodness to endear them to the Will, that being fairly represented, and duly consider'd, they cannot be refused or disesteemed. Here we have Precepts strongly enforced by their own native Purity and Beauty, and powerfully urged by additional Promises and Threats. Nay further; we have Christ himself at once the Founder
of

of these Laws, and the Example of Obedience to them, recommending them to our Practice by his own, and laying upon us all the Obligations that Interest, and Duty, and Gratitude can heap together, to excite and encourage us to do the Will of Him that loved us.

Whilst our Saviour abode upon Earth, he continually *went about doing good* ; it was his Business, it was his Delight to do good to Mankind ; the Miracles he wrought, as well as the Precepts he enjoined, were Charity ; he shewed the greatness of his Love, by doing Works such as never Man did, as well as by speaking Words such as never Man spake ; he gave Eyes to the Blind, Feet to the Lamé, Ears to the Deaf, Health to the Sick, Life to the Dead, and a sound Mind to those that were possessed with Devils. But how astonishing was that Miracle of his Love, when he made his *Soul an Offering for Sin*, when he submitted to the ignominious Death of the Cross for us miserable Sinners, that he might raise us to Life, and exalt us to his heavenly Kingdom ! It is the Observation of the wise Man, *Cant. 5. 6.* that *Love is as strong as Death*. But the Love of Christ was stronger than Death. It not only chearfully put on, but also effectually broke in Pieces the Bonds of that King of Terrors, gain'd a perfect Conquest over and destroy'd even Death it self, and *led Captivity captive*.

Hereby then perceive we the Love of Christ, in that he vouchsafed to repair the Ruins of fall'n degenerate Man ; to make a more full and perfect Revelation of the Divine Will to Mankind ; to leave us *an Example, that we might follow his Steps* ; to become our Surety and to dye for us ; and to open the Kingdom of Heaven to all Believers. For God who is most Wise, and Just, and Pure, thus to love Man, corrupt, impotent, despicable Man ; for the Son of God to leave the Bosom of his Father, *the Glory he had with him before the World was*, to come down upon this Earth ; to ennoble our Nature by appearing to us in our own Flesh, that he might wash our Sins in his own Bloud, and make us happy to Eternity, how vast was the Condescension, how wonderful the Dispensation, how adorable the Riches of the Divine Grace ! Lord, what was Man, that thou hadst such respect unto him, or the Son of Man, that thou didst so regard him ?

It is doubtless the Excellency of Religion to transform its Professors into the Similitude of him, who was the Founder of it ; we cannot therefore be faithful Christians, unless we endeavour to be like him by whose Name we are called, and who alone *is the Author and Finisher of our Faith*. This is the Ground of the Apostle's Exhortation to the *Ephesians*, 5. 2. *Walk in Love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us.*

Did

Did then our blessed Lord love us, and shall not we walk in Love towards the Brethren, who are under the Government of the same Lord with our selves ? Did he, during his abode upon Earth, give the noblest Proof of the most exalted Charity to Mankind, and shall not we endeavour, as far as we are able, to follow his illustrious Example ? Did he who *came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*, relieve the corporal and spiritual Wants of Men, and shall not *the same Mind be in us which was in Christ Jesus* ? Shall we shut up our Bowels of Compassion from our distressed Brother ; shall we turn away our Faces from the Poor, and vex him in his Necessity ? Shall we not rather be *ready to give, and glad to distribute* ? Shall we not strive to assume a Likeness to the compassionate Jesus, by being as charitable as we can to the Souls of Men ? Shall not *our Eyes gush out with Water, because Men keep not his Law*, as he wept over *Jerusalem, because she knew not the Things that belonged to her Peace* ? Shall we not instruct the Ignorant in the knowledge of his Duty, *warn the Unruly*, reprove the Profane, support the Weak, and comfort the Feeble-minded ?

B 2

Again :

Again : Are we the Servants of that Jesus, who heal'd the Wound of that very Man who came out with the Multitude to apprehend him as a Malefactor ? Are we the Disciples of him, who when the *Jews* had apprehended him, might have spoken but a Word and the Earth would have opened her Mouth and swallowed them up ; who might have prayed to his Father, and he would have sent twelve Legions of Angels to confound his Adversaries ; who even in the height of his Sufferings, when they were most barbarously cruel in putting him to Death, was then most graciously merciful to them ; as it were stretching out his Hands on the Cross to embrace them ; praying for his Murderers in that most affectionate Address, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* : And shall we entertain and cherish in our Hearts implacable Thoughts of those that have done us any Wrong ? Shall we give the Reins to our wild unruly Passions, and execute Wrath upon the Injurious ? Shall we not rather, according to the Pattern and Command of our Saviour, *Love our Enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for them that despitefully use us, and persecute us* ? Mat. 5. 44.

A 3d Motive to the love of one another is this, That our love of God, and our highest

est Pretensions to pure and undefiled Religion, are imperfect without it. It is written, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength.* But then it is added, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.* So that our Love to God is but a partial Service, if it be not attended with a hearty and affectionate Love of our Neighbour. Indeed both these Duties are so perfectly consistent, there is so close, so necessary a Connexion betwixt them, that the one cannot be separated from the other without a manifest Violence to both.

This is the Ground of the Apostle's Observation, 1 Joh. 3. 17. *Whoso hath this World's Good, and seeth his Brother have Need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* It has an equal Force with respect to other Cases of Charity, as well as that of dispensing our temporal Goods to the Poor. If therefore, as the same Apostle speaks, *a Man say, I love God, and hateth his Brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his Brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?* And this Commandment have we from him, *that he who loveth God, love his Brother also.*

This

This may be further illustrated from divers Passages in Scripture, wherein the Good and Bad are distinguished from each other by various Resemblances.

1st, By the Flesh and Spirit; the one doing the Works of this, and the other of that : Now most certain it is, that they who love not their Neighbour, do not the Works of the Spirit, but of the Flesh; for they are carnal. It is the express Saying of St. Paul to the *Corinthians*, 1. 3, 3. *Ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is amongst you Envyng and Strife, and Division, are ye not carnal ? And where is this Spirit of Envyng, and Strife, and Division, but where there is no love of our Neighbour ?*

2^{dly}, The Good and Bad are distinguished by Light and Darknes; the one walking as in the Day, setting his Steps aright, the other wandering as in the Night, not seeing whither he goes. This is St. John's Comparison, 1, 2. 10, 11. *He that loveth his Brother, abideth in the Light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his Brother, is in Darknes, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the Darknes hath blinded his Eyes.*

3^{dly}. The

3dly, The Good and Bad are distinguished by Knowledge and Ignorance. *Every one that loveth, says St. John, is born of God, and knoweth God : He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love.*

From whence we may collect, that they, who are in Hatred and Malice, are Carnal, and Blind, and Ignorant, and therefore appear to have little of the Love of God in their Hearts.

And what will all the Perfections of Eloquence, and Learning, and Knowledge, or the Gift of Prophecy, or Faith, or ministering to the Necessities of the Needy, or even Martyrdom it self avail us, if we exercise not Love towards one another, without which, whosoever lives is counted dead before God ? This is clearly proposed by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 13. 1. *Tho' I speak with the Tongue of Men and of Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal ; and though I have the Gift of Prophecy, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge, and though I have all Faith, so that I could remove Mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing ; and though I bestow all my Goods to the Poor, and tho' I give my Body to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing.*

Now

Now the Charity, which the Apostle here speaks of, cannot be meant of our Alms to the Poor, for, says he, *though I bestow all my Goods to the Poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing*; and therefore what is this Charity but a Love of one another; a divesting of our Hearts of all Hatred and Malice, and Envy, and cloathing them with Patience, and Meekness, and Long-suffering, endeavouring *to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace!*

To these Motives of loving one another, I might add the natural tendency of this Duty to promote the Peace and Happiness of Civil Society, whilst its Opposites too visibly exasperate Men against each other, lay the Foundations of intestine Discords, of Divisions and Sub-Divisions, and interrupt the Harmony of publick Communities.

I might further observe the solid Satisfaction and Complacency of Mind that arises from the exercise of this Duty. How pure and refined was the Joy of Job's Heart, amidst the heavy Pressures of his adverse State, when he reviewed the many good Things he had done to the Needy and Distressed in the Days of his Prosperity? *When the Ear heard me, says he, then it blessed me, and when the Eye saw me, it gave witness to*

to me; because I delivered the Poor that cried, and the Fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The Blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon me; and I caused the Widows Heart to sing for Joy. I was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet was I to the Lamé; I was a Father to the Poor, Job 29. Such Reflexions as these could not but lessen the Sorrows of his Heart, and sweeten even the bitter Cup of Affliction.

I might further add, as another cogent Motive to this Duty, that God has annex an exceeding great Recompence of Reward to the Performance of it; that the various Expressions of our Love to our Brethren, will at the great Day of Judgment be openly proclaimed before Men and Angels, as so many Acts of Charity done to Christ himself: For he has told us, That the King will say to them on his right-hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye cloathed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me, Mat. 25.

Having thus offered some Motives to the Practice of this Duty of loving one another, I proceed,

2dly, To take notice of some Instances of the Breach of it.

The *first* Instance I shall mention is, a judging of others, with regard to their spiritual Estate, and the Favour of God. *Stand by thy self, come not near me, for I am holier than thou*, was the proud censorious Boast of the *Jews*, which we find condemned, and God's Judgments threatened against them thereupon, by the Prophet *Isaiab*, 65. 5. Agreeable to which was that of the Pharisee in the Gospel; *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publican.*

Full of this pharisaical Presumption, some Men of boasted Purity and Strictness of Life, have been very busy in assigning Marks and Tokens of Election to themselves, and Reprobation to others, appropriating Heaven to their own Sect, and thrusting out every body else. As if the Merits of Christ's Death were not to extend to the whole Race of Men; or as if the Stream which flowed out of his sacred

cred Side, when he hung upon the Cross, were a Spring assigned for the peculiar Uses of some few Possessors, and not that as a living Fountain it should freely run, that according to the Expression of the Prophet *Isa. 55. Every one that thirsteth may come to the Waters, and he that hath no Money may buy without Money and without Price.* But is not this an unchristian Spirit, opposite to that Charity, which *hopes all things*; opposite to the Mercy of that God, who would have all Men to be saved, and of that gracious Redeemer, who is the Saviour of all ?

And are not they guilty of the Violation of the same mutual Love and Charity, who deny any covenanted Mercy or Favour of God through Christ, to them who are not of their particular Communion ? This is the avowed Principle of some amongst Us, who have of late openly represented the establish'd Church as Schismatical, and distinguish'd themselves by the Name of the *Non-juring Church.* According to their Declaration, the Members of our Church can lay no Claim to God's Promises, no not of his assisting Grace, nor of remission of Sins thro' the Merits of Christ's Blood.

Surely it is not consistent with the Spirit of the Gospel, for Men to exclude those from their Charity, whom Christ has not excluded from his Mercy. To make the strait Gate, and the narrow Way to Heaven yet more enclosed, more hardly passable, than the Author of our Salvation has made it, is to usurp the Authority of Christ, and to place themselves in his and God's stead.

There is one very important Consideration, which ought to deter all from thus casting others out of the Favour of God, which is this, that so to do is an effectual Way to deprive themselves of it. For when our Saviour bids us, *judge not that we be not judged*, he subjoins; *for with what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what Measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.* Matth. 7. 1. And St. James has expressly assured us, 2. 13. that *he shall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath shewed no Mercy.*

2. Another Instance of the Breach of the Duty of Christian Love, is Men's treating one another with Wrath and Bitterness, and Contempt on the account of Differences in Matters of lesser consequence.

It

It is a melancholly Reflexion, that when Men are agreed in the Fundamentals of Religion, they should form Parties and Factions, and be exasperated against each other on the account of some external Rites and Customs, or Points of Speculation, which neither are, nor are pretended to be of the Essence of Religion. Whereas if Men did but consider, that all have not the same Sentiments of Things, that an Identity of Opinion in all is absolutely impossible, because of the different Measures of their Understandings, and the different Opportunities of Information, they would lay aside their unhappy Prejudices against each other, and according to the Apostle's Exhortation to the *Ephesians*, they would *walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith they are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love ; 4. 2.*

It is doubtless one thing to differ from our Brethren in Judgment, and another to be at Variance with them ; That perhaps is what we cannot help, but this we must avoid. We are not certain, nor is it probable that the whole Multitude of Believers which we read of *Acts 4.* were all of one Opinion ; but thus much St. Luke

Luke assures us concerning them, that they were all of one Heart.

But if, notwithstanding Men's unavoidably different Ways of Thinking, some will be so fond of their own particular Opinions, as to make them the Standard of Orthodoxy ; if Men will deify their own Interpretations and expect that others should fall down and pay a kind of Worship to them ; if they will contend as earnestly for their own human Schemes, as for the Divine Faith once, and once for all delivered to the Saints ; if they will deny to others that Christian Liberty, which they make use of themselves, of an impartial Enquiry after Truth, and a Judgment of Discretion consequent thereupon ; what can be the Result of such Conduct but endless Heats and Animosities in Religion ? Division must succeed in the place of Unity, and the Foundations of Charity be laid waste. What an inauspicious Influence this kind of Conduct once had upon the Peace of the Church, is fully evidenced by the fierce Disputes between the *Eastern* and *Western* Churches about the particular Time of keeping *Easter*. *

By

* *Causes of Decay of Christian Piety.* P. 250.

By being very tenacious of a Circumstance of that Celebration, they lost the more essential Requisite, that of Charity ; they kept the Feast indeed, but with the Leaven of Malice, and absurdly commemorated the Redintegration of Christ's natural Body, by mutilating and dividing his mystical.

The last Breach of the Duty of Christian Love that I shall mention, is Persecuting Men upon the account of Religion. A Practice as opposite to the true genuine Spirit of the Gospel, as Light to Darkness.

The End of our Saviour's coming in the Flesh was to reconcile God to Men, and Men to one another. *His Kingdom is not of this World :* As it was not founded in worldly Power, so neither is it to be maintain'd by it. He was the meek and gentle Lamb of God ; a Stranger to Violence, and an Enemy to furious Zeal ; according to the express Prediction of the Evangelical Prophet concerning him ; *He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his Voice to be heard in the Streets. A bruised Reed shall he not break, and the smoking Flax shall he not quench, Isa. 42. 2, 3.*

When

When he commissioned his Disciples to go forth into all the World, he did not empower them to proclaim a War, but to publish the glad Tidings of Peace. He said to *Peter, Feed my Sheep*; and surely that cannot be interpreted as a Commission to devour the Flock: He sent his Apostles to convert the World by a *Form of sound Words*, and not by the Edge of the Sword: He sent them to preach the Doctrine of the Cross, and not to execute the Punishments of it. Whosoever therefore endeavours to plant or to propagate Religion by Violence, are false Pretenders to the Christian Name, and, as our Saviour told his unwarrantably zealous Disciples, who would have had him call for Fire from Heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans, *know not what manner of Spirit they are of; for the Son of Man came not to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them, Luke 9. 55, 56.*

The Christian Religion, like its Author, is peaceable, as well as pure; it is indeed engaged in a continual War with Vices and Sins, but not with Men, and *the Weapons of its Warfare are not carnal, but spiritual.* If there are any Marks of Blood upon it, they are only of that of the noble

ble Army of Martyrs, who fell a Sacrifice to the cruel Rage and bigotted Zeal of Heathen and antichristian Persecutors, and a Conformity to their great Master's Examples were *made perfect through Sufferings*.

How far the Church of *Rome* has departed from the true Spirit of Christianity, which breaths nothing but Peace and Love and Charity, is plainly evidenced by her mighty Acquisitions of temporal Grandeur through Violence and Cruelty, through Massacres and Inquisitions, through Racks and Tortures, by persecuting even to Death those that would not submit to her imperious Decisions and obey her rather than God. *Let not our Souls come into her Secrets, and unto her Assemblies let not our Honour be united;* for her Tyranny has cruelly enforced what her Superstition has gradually introduced; She has been drunk with the Blood of Thousands of Saints; with the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus. Far be from us that fierce, vindictive, exterminating Zeal, which we so justly condemn in her: Far be it from us not to express, not to practice towards her that Charity, which She so undeniably appears to be destitute of.

D

It

It is indeed a Matter of just Concern ; that there are some even of our own Communion so wretchedly deluded as to become Patrons of that wicked and absurd Method of gaining Profelytes to the Church by Persecution ; wicked, because as I before observed, it is opposite to the Genius of the Gospel ; and absurd because it cannot possibly promote the true Ends of Religion. Force may make a conforming Hypocrite, but it cannot make a sincere Convert ; because it is not in its Power to sway the Mind, to incline the Will or to determine the Judgment. But let not these Advocates for temporal Sanctions charge the Church of *England* with allowing and directing such Methods ; let them have the Glory of them to themselves, if there be any Glory in lording it over God's Heritage, and exercising Dominion over the Consciences of Men. To the truly Christian, because truly charitable Principles of this most excellent Church it is our Duty stedfastly to adhere : We ought always to be zealously affected towards her, but then our Zeal must be according to Knowledge ; it must be regulated by Prudence and bounded by Moderation ; it must express it self in the nervous
Force

Force of Argument, and the gentle Methods of Persuasion, not in the Thundrings of *Anathema's* or the Flames of Persecution.

We have, blessed be God, a King set over this Church and Nation, who heartily detests every Kind and Degree of Persecution; whom * as a learned Member of this Church once excellently observed in this Place, as no love of Power can tempt to break in upon the Civil Rights of his Subjects, so neither can a false Zeal induce him to violate the Natural Right tender Consciences have to serve God in their own Way. 'Tis our Happiness, as the same learned Author has expressed it, to be under the Protection of a Prince, who will not be wicked for God, nor cruel in Charity to the Souls of Men; who knows how to distinguish between Superstition and Religion, and can make Zeal consist with Moderation, so as to encourage and protect the Church, without doing violence to the Consciences of those whose Unhappiness it is to dissent from it.

D 2

Thus

* The Reverend Dr. Hare, Dean of Worcester, in a Sermon on the First of August.

Thus have I endeavour'd to set before You some of the many engaging Motives to the exercise of Christian Love, and have observed some Instances of the Breaches of it. And now how happy would it be for us if we could but at last be prevail'd upon to think on and to Practice this plain, this necessary, this agreeable Duty; if we could but be persuaded to *love as Brethren, with a pure Heart, fervently*; with an undissembled Sincerity and a warm Affection! How joyful and Pleasant a thing would it be, if we understood our own Interest so far as *to dwell together in Unity!* In order to the effectual obtaining of this blessed End, let us seriously lay to Heart our unhappy Divisions; let the unreasonable Jealousies and Suspicions and Animosities, which have been so flagrant amongst us, which have diffused themselves through all Orders and Degrees of Men, which have been too long the Sport and Triumph of our Enemies, and if not put a Stop to will at length be the Ruin of our selves, be removed far from us; let our mutual judgments and despisings of each other cease and be no more; let the strong bear with the Infirmities of the Weak; let the most candid Interpretations, the most favourable Constructions be put upon the Words and Actions

ons of our Neighbours ; let us take heed, that whilst we would seem to be Religious, we appear not Uncharitable. If our Disputes in Religion cannot be superseded, if there must still be Controversies amongst us, let them be peaceably and amicably maintained ; let not the Reasonings of Men resemble the Violence of Winds ; let not Victory be contended for with disdainful Sharpness of Wit, but let Truth be asserted with Soberness and Meekness ; let not the difference of our Judgments alienate our Affections from each other, and though our Opinions vary, let not our Hearts be divided, let the uncharitably Cenforious be reconciled to their injured Brethren, and let the uncharitably Censured, forgive. In short, let Love have its perfect Work, and then we may hope to see our Breaches repaired, our Wounds healed, and our Church as a City at Unity in it self.

Not more Affectionate therefore in its Proposal than seasonable for our Meditation, and Useful for our Practice, is St. Paul's Advice to the *Colossians*, 3. 12. *Put on therefore as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, Long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another,*

nother, if any Man have a Quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you so also do ye. And above all these things put on Charity, which is the Bond of Perfectness. Put on that Charity which is the abridgment of Christian Perfection, and the End of the Commandment; that Charity, without which all our other Virtues have but a false Lustre, all our other doings are nothing worth; that Charity which never fails; but whether there be Prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be Tongues, they shall cease, whether there be Knowledge, it shall vanish away. In a Word, that Charity, which is vastly preferable to the exalted Graces of Faith and Hope; for in the Kingdom of Heaven Faith shall be swallowed up in Vision, and Hope shall be consummated in Enjoyment, but Charity shall reign in those blissful Mansions for evermore.

F I N I S.

